

T
THINGOE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

(WEST SUFFOLK)



REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

1970.

P. COGGIN BROWN, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.F.H.



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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health of the Rural District of Thingoe, in the County of West Suffolk, for the year ended 31st December, 1970.

Thingoe House,
Northgate Street,
BURY ST. EDMUNDS,
Suffolk.

Mr. Chairman, My Lady, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of the Public Health Service for the year 1970.

There was a marked increase in the estimated figure for the population of the district. There were rises in the birth and death rates, but the former was above and the latter below the corresponding rates for England and Wales as a whole.

Although 135 cases of measles were notified the general incidence of infectious disease was low.

In the substance of this report reference is made to the satisfactory progress which has been made with the Council's programme for dealing with sub-standard housing conditions and to the interest which has been shown in obtaining Improvement Grants.

Your Public Health Inspectors continued their efforts to encourage the maintenance of high standards of food hygiene.

Further attempts have been made during the year to prevent or reduce the dumping of rubbish in the countryside. Here and there improvement has been achieved but at some other sites the conditions are worse. In general improvement is disappointingly slow.

Very good progress has been made during the last 10 years with the provision and extension of sewerage facilities throughout the district.

My thanks are due to all the members of my staff and especially to Mr. F. Holmes your Chief Public Health Inspector for his loyal support at all times and for his help in the compilation of this report.

Finally I should like to record my appreciation of the encouragement I have received from the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient servant,
P. COGGIN BROWN,
Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE.

Councillor J.H. Warren - CHAIRMAN.

Councillor N.H.H. Nichols - VICE-CHAIRMAN.

COUNCILLORS.

B. Budnick.	M.J. Milburn.
H.H. Cawston.	W.R. Mizen.
D.E. Evans.	Air. Cdre.V.H.B. Roth.
R.F. Grimwood (Died 21.3.71.).	K.M. Spence.
C.W.G. Hatten.	S.T.Thurlow.
A.R. Jones.	N.R. Whitwell.
T.T.F. May.	C. Winsor.
L. Wright.	

THE STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

P. COGGIN BROWN, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.

This Officer holds in addition the following appointments:-

Assistant County Medical Officer)	West Suffolk County Council.
School Medical Officer)	
Medical Officer of Health		Borough of Bury St. Edmunds.

CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR.

F. HOLMES, F.A.P.H.I., M.R.S.H.,
Meat and Other Foods Certificate R.S.H.
Hons. Dip. R.I.P.H. AND H.

This Officer is also appointed Inspector under the Petroleum
and Explosives Acts.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTORS.

S.T. AARON, M.A.P.H.I.,
Meat and Other Foods Certificate R.S.H.
Smoke Inspector's Certificate R.S.H.
Sanitary Science as applied to Building and Public Works Certificate R.S.H.
Tropical Hygiene Certificate R.S.H.

C.P. RAMPLING, M.A.P.H.I.
Dip. P.H.I.E.B.

CLERK/TYPIST.
MISS. J. HONEYWOOD.

RODENT OPERATORS.
C.H.W. HOLDEN.
H.V. MILLS.*

*Retired 23rd September, 1970.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

	Area.....106,739 acres.		
	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>
Registrar General's estimate of the resident population.	23,750	22,460	21,870
Census 1961 (April)	20,070		
Rateable Value	£552,445	£502,379	£464,494

VITAL STATISTICS.

POPULATION.

The Registrar General's estimate of the population showed a substantial rise of 1,290.

LIVE BIRTHS.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate.	215	173	388
Illegitimate.	6	10	16
	<u>221</u>	<u>183</u>	<u>404</u>
	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>
	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>
Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population.	17.0	16.3	17.3
Corrected Birth Rate per 1,000 population.	18.0	16.3	17.3
Birth Rate per 1,000 population England and Wales.	16.0	16.3	17.2
Legitimate Live Births per cent of total live births.	96.0	94.0	93.1
Comparability factor for births.	1.06	1.00	1.00

STILLBIRTHS.

	<u>Male.</u>	<u>Female.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate.	2	1	3
Illegitimate.	-	-	-
	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>
Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 Live and Still Births.	7.0	16.0	18.0
Stillbirth Rate per 1,000 Live and Still Births England and Wales.	13.0	13.0	14.0

B I R T H S.

There was an increase in the birthrate and the adjusted figure was considerably above that for England and Wales as a whole.

D E A T H S.

	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>
Crude Death Rate per 1,000 population.	9.3	8.0	8.9
Corrected Death Rate per 1,000 population.	10.4	8.6	9.7
Death Rate per 1,000 population England and Wales.	11.7	11.9	11.0
Ratio of local adjusted rate to national rate.	0.89	0.72	
Comparability factor for deaths.	1.12	1.07	1.09

After decreases in the death rate in each of the preceding three years there was a marked increase from the exceptionally low figure for 1969. The new adjusted rate of 10.4 per thousand of the population, however, still compared quite favourably with that for England and Wales.

I N F A N T M O R T A L I T Y.

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Death of infants of under 1 year of age:			
Legitimate.	5	4	9
Illegitimate.	1	-	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	6	4	10
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births.	25.0	11.0	21.0
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births England and Wales.	18.0	18.0	18.0
Perinatal Mortality Rate per 1,000 total Live and Still Births.	29.0	24.0	28.0

The number of deaths of infants under one year of age increased from 4 in the previous year to 10 in the year under review, consequently there was a large increase in the Infant Mortality Rate, but this rate must be expected to vary widely from one year to the next because it is based upon a relatively small number of births. All the infant deaths occurred in the first month of life and the causes were as follows:

Congenital anomalies.....2. Birth injuries....2.

Other causes of perinatal mortality..6.

The following table gives the causes and number of deaths which occurred during 1970.

	Registrar General's Figures.	
	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>
Malignant Neoplasm, Oesophagus	2	-
Malignant Neoplasm, Stomach	6	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Intestine	3	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Lung, Bronchus	11	2
Malignant Neoplasm, Breast	-	5
Malignant Neoplasm, Uterus	-	1
Malignant Neoplasm, Prostate	1	-
Leukaemia	1	1
Other Malignant Neoplasms	6	5
Diabetes Mellitus	2	-
Anaemias	-	1
Other Diseases of Blood, Etc.	1	-
Chronic Rheumatic Heart Disease	2	-
Hypertensive Disease	-	2
Ischaemic Heart Disease	31	16
Other Forms of Heart Disease	3	16
Cerebrovascular Disease	13	13
Other Diseases of Circulatory System	4	3
Influenza	1	-
Pneumonia	13	10
Bronchitis and Emphysema	5	3
Asthma	1	-
Other Diseases of Respiratory System	2	1
Peptic Ulcer	1	-
Appendicitis	-	1
Intestinal Obstruction and Hernia	-	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	1	-
Other Diseases of Digestive System	-	1
Hyperplasia of Prostate	1	-
Other Diseases, Genito-Urinary System	3	1
Diseases of Musculo-Skeletal System	-	1
Congenital Anomalies	1	1
Birth Injury, Difficult Labour Etc.	1	1
Other Causes of Perinatal Mortality	4	2
Motor Vehicle Accidents	4	-
All Other Accidents	2	2
Suicide and Self-Inflicted Injuries	2	-
 TOTAL ALL CAUSES	 128	 93

COMPARATIVE VITAL STATISTICS.

	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961
Birth Rate (Corrected)	18.0	16.3	17.3	17.1	20.1	18.3	20.7	18.8	18.6	17.0
Death Rate (Corrected)	10.4	8.6	9.7	9.8	11.0	8.9	9.8	10.9	8.8	8.9
Infant Mortality Rate.	25.0	11.0	21.0	19.0	22.2	18.4	30.2	15.5	24.6	21.2
Number of Infant Deaths.	10	4	8	7	9	7	12	6	9	7

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES.

The following table shows the number of cases of infectious diseases notified during the year. These are the final numbers after corrections made either by the notifying Medical Practitioner or by the Medical Superintendent of the Infectious Diseases Hospital.

	<u>Males.</u>	<u>Females.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Measles	68	67	135
Scarlet Fever	2	4	6
Whooping Cough	5	6	11
Food Poisoning	3	-	3
Meningitis	1	-	1
Infective Hepatitis	1	-	1

T U B E R C U L O S I S.

New Cases.

	<u>1970.</u>	<u>1969.</u>	<u>1968.</u>	<u>1967.</u>	<u>1966.</u>	<u>1965.</u>	<u>1964.</u>	<u>1963.</u>	<u>1962.</u>	<u>1961.</u>
Pulmonary	2	Nil	Nil	2	1	3	5	2	7	5
Non-Pulmonary	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	1	1	Nil

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.

THE WORK OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE.

INTRODUCTION.

The staff remained the same except for the retirement towards the end of the year of Mr. Mills who had been employed on rodent control for over 21 years. Mr. Mills was well known throughout the area and we wish him well in his retirement.

Matters dealt with by the Department were again varied but the emphasis changes year by year. With continued sophistication of industrial and agricultural methods so the problems tend to become more involved. The problems of noise control, disposal of complex industrial wastes, chemical pollutants and the byproducts of factory farming are all modern phenomena requiring modern answers. The paragraphs that follow pinpoint some of these problems and at the same time, give statistics in those areas which are the everyday concern of the Health Department. This concern involves the residential, working and recreational environments of each and every citizen and the report is split into these three divisions.

"THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT".

HOUSING.

The Council's clearance programme is now running down and required 45 houses to be dealt with during the year. This target has been achieved without hardship or heartbreak and this is very satisfying.

A. CLEARANCE.

Houses demolished.....	31.
Houses closed (vacant).....	11.

B. RECONSTRUCTION.

Houses made fit after formal action....	2.
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Houses made fit after informal action.	28.
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(Of these one was the subject of a Demolition Order and seven of Closing Orders).

C. REPAIR.

Houses repaired after formal action....	1.
Houses repaired after informal action.	25.

Of the families displaced by clearance action, 16 were rehoused by the Council.

D. IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

The improvement and preservation of existing properties has always been a priority task of the Department and the campaign put on by Central Government has resulted in more enquiries. Tenants are, in the main, frightened to use their powers to enforce improvement although one did so during the year. This state of affairs will continue until the Local Authority has the powers to deal with these properties by a Time and Place procedure, similar to that used for unfit dwellings.

	<u>Standard Grants.</u>	<u>Improvement Grants.</u>
Applied for	30	40
Refused	-	1
Withdrawn	2	3
Approved	27	35
Completed	34	20

E. NEW BUILDING.

Speculative and private building showed some recovery in the year; mortgages seemed a little easier to obtain and the population became a little more mobile. Council building was restricted due to the heavy rent increases which would inevitably follow a large capital programme together with the fact that despite a waiting list of almost 400, the number of casual vacancies together with the houses in the building programme would appear to be sufficient to satisfy the demand of those genuinely in need.

	<u>Private.</u>	<u>Council.</u>
New properties completed.	209	11

F. COUNCIL PROPERTIES. - (Information supplied by Housing Manager).

At the end of the year under review the Council owned 464 bungalows, 1033 houses and 54 units of old people's accommodation, 11 maisonettes and flats and 47 properties bought in lieu of demolition. This total of 1609 dwellings represents 21% of the total housing stock of the area. (Total 7518).

Only 17 remain to be modernised and these are included in a programme due for completion in 1972. The delay in the implementation of modernisation schemes has been due to the fact that it seemed appropriate to carry out such work following the provision of main sewers where these were proposed.

G. OVERCROWDING.

No new cases of legal overcrowding have been brought to notice during the year. Two cases have been abated with the reduction of occupants by marriage.

H. CARAVANS.

The caravan is still popular with the few but mainly for one of two reasons; mobility and ready availability. Only a minority of families who are permanently settled in the area occupy a caravan by choice. The vans sited within the area are as follows:-

Nature of Use	Sites	Caravans
Residential Sites (private)	34	153
Residential Sites (local authority)	1	18
Agricultural workers	10	35
Showmen's Guild (seasonal)	3	8
Incidental to a dwelling	5	5
Incidental to construction work	4	4
TOTALS	57	223

Seven sites containing eight vans were discontinued during the year.

Itinerant workers, including gypsies, are made welcome on the Council's site at Rymer Point and there has been no problem warranting extra sites during the year.

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL.

A. SMOKE ABATEMENT.

Not a single complaint has been received or detected at any industrial chimney but two cases of black smoke from burning wastes were dealt with informally. One was concerned with vehicle tyres and the other with general waste.

A further fire at an industrial waste tip caused concern and had to be dug out at considerable expense to the company concerned.

B. TRAFFIC FUMES.

Although rural areas are not affected to any real degree we are a nation of motorists and no driver has failed to find himself behind a vehicle discharging foul exhaust fumes at some time or other. Legislation is on the way and manufacturers are already paying considerable attention to the problem. A welcome improvement should result.

C. INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ODOURS.

The summer months brought their usual spate of complaints of smells. People enjoying their gardens naturally resent continued dosing with repulsive odours. Two such cases affecting considerable numbers of persons were reported and both concerned pig manure. One from slurry spreading lasted a brief time only but the other was due to a farmer continually moving pig manure each day over a Bank Holiday weekend. No doubt it was in the interests of good husbandry but it gave rise to bad public relations!

FOOD INSPECTION.

A. MEAT INSPECTION.

A full postmortem inspection was carried out on each animal killed at the slaughterhouse and the details asked for by the Ministry are appended. Regular visits were also paid to the one poultry packing establishment but full inspection is not possible as the birds are sold unviscerated.

The casual slaughter of poultry, especially for the Christmas trade has escaped inspection for two reasons. Firstly, premises where this work is done do not have to be registered and are therefore not known, and secondly, they have - until now - been exempt from Food Hygiene Regulations. From March, 1971 they will not be exempt; but the need for prior registration of all premises proposed to be used for the handling of food is now overwhelmingly evident.

The number of animals killed were as follows:-

Cattle excluding cows.....	103.
Pigs.....	6.
Calf.....	1.
Sheep.....	1.

Unfit meat and offals were surrendered for the following reasons:-

CATTLE.

Livers (Abscesses).....	16.
Livers (distoma).....	1.
Part Livers (distoma).....	2.
Part Livers (abscesses).....	1.
Lungs (pleurisy).	3.
Spleen (adhesions).....	1.
Liver (necrosis).....	1.
Lungs (abscesses).....	1.
Part Liver (cirrhosis).....	1.
Lungs (emphysema).....	3.
Lungs (contamination).....	1.

CHICKEN.

1 chicken (contaminated).....	$2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
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B. FOOD PREMISES.

The general standard of food hygiene has been fairly good but too many food handlers still have to be reminded regularly of the need for rather greater care than is often given. Some premises are not as suitable as one would like to see for the uses to which they are put. The need for prior registration is clear. The proposed changes in the Food Hygiene Regulations are inadequate to rectify the serious failings which result from their present weaknesses, being in some cases retrogressive, i.e. the discontinued requirement for hot water in premises selling drinks only.

The problems associated with date coding of shop goods have been publicly aired and have shown very clearly that the rotation and examination of stock is widely neglected. One complaint of bread quality indicated clearly that the "sale or return" practice was being abused and that returned goods were being redelivered as fresh to the next retailer.

PREMISES RECORDED BY TYPE OF BUSINESS WERE AS FOLLOWS:-

General Stores.....	59.
Confectionaries.....	9.
Licensed Premises.....	47.
Canteens.....	5.
Fish Frying Shops.....	2.
Butcheries.....	8.
Cafe's.....	3.
Bakeries.....	2.
Licensed Clubs.....	17.
Day School Kitchens.....	7.
Boarding School Kitchens.....	3.
Wholesale Warehouses (Food).....	4.
Nursing Institutions.....	2.

C. UNSOUND FOOD.

Five complaints of unsound food were made to the Department, of which two concerned the sale of mouldy foods but the sales had not taken place within the area. One complaint of a delivery of a considerable quantity of unsound food to an institution was found to have been due to an instructional error. The goods were replaced. Ash in a delivery of sausages was thought to have been introduced after delivery. In no case were proceedings instituted.

A tin of creamed rice was submitted for chemical analysis but was found to be satisfactory.

Regular examination of doubtful, damaged and unsound food at a wholesale warehouse resulted in the following quantities being surrendered for disposal by the Department:-

Canned Meats.....	1 Cwt.	31 lbs.
Other canned foods.....	18 Cwt.	1 lb.
Other foods.....	2 Cwt.	100 lbs.

D. MILK AND DAIRIES.

The number of dairies registered remains at four. The West Suffolk County Council are responsible for the issue of Special Designation licences and take all samples for quality as the Food and Drugs Authority.

Complaints of dirty milk bottles continue to come in regularly and these are referred to the Authority in whose area the milk is bottled, together with all the evidence which may prove relevant.

E. WATER SUPPLIES.

The supply of mains water is the responsibility of the West Suffolk Water Board from which supplies have been satisfactory in quantity and quality.

Private supplies are monitored through the office laboratory and advice given where appropriate. One institution was found to have a polluted supply and the efficiency of a new chlorinator was under test at the end of the year.

Two samples of supplies extracted from bores in the vicinity of waste disposal points proved satisfactory on biological and chemical tests. Further samples will be taken at appropriate intervals to assess any possible pollution.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS.

A. PESTS.

Whilst many people dislike certain members of the fauna which inhabit our environment few are of danger to health. Those that are, are dealt with by the Department on request, at a nominal charge.

Complaints dealt with during the year included:-

Wasps Nests.....	96.
Animal flea infestations.....	2.
Cockroach infestations.....	3.
Bat colonies.....	3.
Beetle infestations.....	3.
Hornets nests.....	2.
Fly infestations.....	3.
Ants nests.....	5.
Martin bug infestation.....	1.

The greatest threat to health and the economy from pests is certainly that from rats and mice. Despite certain claims that rats are becoming immune to Warfarin this has not been proved in this area. Mice have, however, proved more difficult and in the cold weather Alpha-Chloralose proved effective. A fully effective poison for mice, safe and efficient to use, would prove of tremendous value.

The farm contract system has proved successful and other business properties have been treated at cost or on contract. Domestic properties continue to receive a free service.

Properties inspected and treated were as follows:-

	TYPE OF PROPERTY	
	NON- AGRICULTURAL	AGRICULTURAL
1. Properties in District	8931	-
2. a. Total number of properties (including nearby premises) inspected following notification.	274	24
b. Number infested by:		
i Rats	207	24
ii Mice	133	22
3. a. Total number of properties inspected for rats and/or mice for reasons other than notification.	212	112
b. Number infested by:		
i Rats	98	58
ii Mice	85	97

THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT.

Legislation is now very wide-reaching in its application to the working conditions in most classes of employment. Various officers are responsible for differing aspects of the work including Factory Inspectors, Alakali Inspectors, Agricultural Safety Officers and ourselves. Co-operation between the various Inspectorates and the Department is excellent - and this opportunity is taken to express our gratitude for the help and advice which has been readily given by all concerned.

A. FACTORIES ACTS.

The Department is responsible for aspects of structural fitness and cleanliness in factories where no power is used but only one of these is on the register. In other factories we are responsible for the adequacy of conveniences only under the Act. Other Acts also apply to canteens, rodent infestations, boiler houses, chimneys and premises where food is made or stored or where petroleum mixtures or explosives are used or made or stored. People working in their own homes on factory processes are also visited. Figures required by the appropriate Ministry Department are as follows:-

Part I Of The Act.

Premises (1)	Number on Register (2)	Number of		
		Inspect- ions. (3)	Written Notices. (4)	Occupiers Prosecuted (5)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	1	1	Nil	Nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	91	102	10	Nil
(iii) Other premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority (Excluding out-workers' premises)	110	57	1	Nil
TOTAL	202	160	11	Nil

2 - Cases in which DEFECTS were found.

Particulars (1)	Found (2)	Number of cases in which defects were found.			Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted. (6)
		Remedied (3)	Referred BY H.M. Inspector (4)	TO H.M. Inspector (5)	
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)					
a. Insufficient	8	7	Nil	Nil	Nil
b. Unsuitable or defective	20	4	2	Nil	Nil
c. Not separate for sexes	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Other offences against the Act (Not including offences relating to Out-work)	1	Nil	Nil	1	Nil
TOTAL	29	11	2	1	Nil

Part VIII Of The Act.

OUTWORK
(Section 133 and 134).

Nature of work. (1)	No. of Out-workers in August list required by Section (133(1)(c)). (2)	Section 133		Section 134		
		No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council (3)	No. of prosecutions for failure to supply lists. (4)	No. of instances of work in unwholesome premises. (5)	Notices served. (6)	Prosecutions. (7)
Wearing apparel making etc	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
The making of boxes or other receptacles or parts thereof made wholly or partially of paper.	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
TOTAL	1	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

B. OFFICES, SHOPS AND RAILWAY PREMISES ACT, 1963.

All premises now registered under the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963 have been fully inspected and recorded. No serious contraventions were noted and no accidents reported. Infringements were of a relatively minor nature and the list shows that lack of information for employees and lack of a full first aid kit were the most common failings although lack of cleanliness and lack of adequate heating came close third and fourth.

REGISTRATIONS AND GENERAL INSPECTIONS.

Class of Premises.	Number of premises newly registered during the year.	Total number of registered premises at end of year.	Number of premises receiving one or more general inspections during the year.
Offices.....	2	32	31
Retail shops.....	3	30	28
Wholesale shops, Warehouses.....	2	5	5
Catering establishments open to the public, canteens.....	-	10	11
Fuel storage depots..	-	3	3
TOTAL	7	80	78

Number of visits of all kinds (including general inspections) to registered premises.....117

Class of Workplace	Number of persons employed.
Offices.....	135
Retail shops.....	71
Wholesale departments, Warehouses.....	89
Catering establishments open to the public	20
Canteens.....	4
Fuel storage depots.....	4
TOTAL	323
TOTAL MALES	184
TOTAL FEMALES	139

C. RADIOACTIVITY.

One licence was in force for the use of radioactive materials. This was a trace element in fertilizer. A Neutron emitter used for research was also inspected and stored satisfactorily.

D. AGRICULTURE (SAFETY HEALTH AND WELFARE) PROVISIONS ACT.

Although primarily an agricultural area the employment rate in this industry is dropping. Again, employees are rarely employed constantly in the immediate vicinity of buildings or main services and the provision of permanent facilities is often not a practical matter. Where such provision has been practical and desireable, such as at intensive rearing units, owners have been generally co-operative in providing fixed and adequate facilities. Fruit growers too have been forward-looking in the provision of facilities for temporary pickers. It is a regrettable fact that the users are not always appreciative of the facilities and owners are naturally loath to replace abused or damaged equipment.

THE RECREATIONAL ENVIRONMENT.

A. THE LITTER PROBLEM.

The continued use of hedgerows and depressions to dump unwanted litter is to be deplored. Despite the excellent publicity given to this problem by Radio, T.V. and the local newspapers, anti-social members of the public continue this unnecessary pursuit. A poster campaign at all known litter points resulted in the posters being torn down and consigned to the existing heaps of rubbish. Our efforts will continue. The countryside is our heritage and owners are invariably willing for the public to use it. How unfortunate that the few abuse it.

B. SWIMMING POOLS AND BATHING PLACES.

Regular sampling of bathing pools has shown a high degree of care and attention. Alterations to the filtration equipment of one widely used pool was carried out towards the end of the year.

Bathing in the rivers continued despite their unsatisfactory condition and the warning notice at Knettishall was again removed by persons unknown. No known illness was attributed to the use of rivers but the risks remain.

Contamination of natural waters by chemicals - which may contain a wide variety of substances - in addition to the natural hazards such as Weil's disease etc., are all potentially serious. With a growing population, adequate safe bathing facilities are essential. Whilst every precaution is taken by the Statutory bodies to maintain the natural purity of rivers, they never can be guaranteed safe. As the notices repeat - persons bathing in rivers do so at their own risk!

C. FAIRGROUNDS, ETC.

The traditional fairs still keep their statutory pitches on the village greens but cause no nuisance, unless their accompanying music exceeds the normal decibel level. People are generally tolerant of this as it is usually for only two or three days in the year. The village fete is also part of the scene and motorcross, motorcycle racing and this next year point-to-point racing will join the periodic agricultural show as regular means of recreation. Each of these events can give rise to nuisance - or another outbreak of food poisoning. Visits to ensure the maintenance of standards are made from time to time to discourage the caterer with low standards or poor quality wares.

D. CAMPING AND TOURISM.

Due to the growing popularity of camping and touring the demand for overnight stops and holiday sites is now developing. Naturalists visiting the forests, sailors on their way to the Broads, Foreign visitors studying our heritage are coming in increasing numbers and with them come possible public health problems. The widespread use of small caravans by families at weekends means that catering wastes are accumulated. Not everyone takes them home for disposal.

Similarly, the lack of public conveniences at picnic places means that hedgerows and bushes offer the only privacy for the individual. They are also often used for the disposal of chemical closet wastes rather than the contents being retained in the van.

This year a site for 60 touring vans and tents will be developed ready for next season but sites like the Kings Forest, Knettishall Heath and sections of the river banks are becoming more and more popular.

Facilities - possibly mobile - should now be considered. Again, the lack of public facilities on the major roads through the district leads to regular complaints in the Summer months. This lack has been referred to in previous reports but has not been resolved, mainly due to the refusal of other bodies to consider our proposals for grant purposes. Unless there is a change of heart soon it will be imperative that we go ahead and provide facilities at our own expense.

SANITARY SERVICES.

This information has been supplied by:-

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SEWERAGE.

The Council's sewerage programme proceeded satisfactorily during 1970. After the delay reported in last year's annual report the village of Pakenham was finally connected to the new sewers by the end of the year. At the same time the Thedwaste Rural District Council's Thurston works had been extended to accommodate the flow. There remained only the restoration of Pakenham Street which had been severely disturbed by the sewerage works. The County Council Highways Department, proposes a complete reconstruction of the Street early in the new year.

Messrs. D. & H. Contractors of Cambridge who were engaged on the Hawstead, Whepstead and Brockley scheme, made extremely good progress throughout 1970 and by the end of the year Permutit Contact Stabilisation plant had been constructed and was ready for operation. It is anticipated that early in the new year the parish of Hawstead will be contributing to the new works and that, within a few months, both Whepstead and Brockley will also be sewered.

The Westley Sewerage scheme was still not finally completed even at the end of 1970. Delays in obtaining power supplies resulted in a very small part of the village not being able to connect until early in 1971. As reported last year the Stanton, Ixworth and Bardwell scheme was put out to tender and works commenced in September, 1970. The successful contractor on this occasion was Messrs. T. Philipson of Sudbury.

The grouping of other villages into the Lark Valley system continued with the preparation of schemes for Lackford and Hengrave and it was possible during the year to complete the change over in the village of Hengrave by the installation of a new pumping station discharging into the sewers at Flempton. The scheme for Lackford was well advanced and it is anticipated that work will commence on the scheme early in 1971. Thus, the policy of grouping villages will have been carried to the limit in the case of the Lark Valley complex, in that one works will be dealing with the sewage from nine villages.

The same system is being pursued in the Stanton area where the scheme reported in the previous paragraph will bring together the sewage from three large villages into one works at Stanton.

The growth of the village of Barrow necessitated a reconstruction of the sewage works constructed there in 1948. A works designed at that time to deal with a dry weather flow of 15,000 gallons per day was grossly overloaded as a result of new development. A scheme for enlarging the works to deal with a minimum of 45,000 gallons per day dry weather flow was approved by the Minister and by the end of the year, works of reconstruction were well advanced.

For some considerable time a sewage works taken over from the War Department at Knettishall had produced an intermittently unsatisfactory effluent and it was felt that major reconstruction works should be carried out to improve this position. During the year therefore, a scheme was prepared for improving the humus tank treatment which was unsatisfactory and it is anticipated that during 1971 the reconstruction of the Knettishall works will effectively improve the standard of discharge.

What appeared to be a formidable programme of sewerage 10 years ago now appears to be drawing to a close. The Council has by its policy of employing sufficient staff to carry through its programme, succeeded in this period of time in almost completing its outstanding requirements. It is anticipated that within three years there will, in fact, remain very little to be done in the way of sewerage in the rural area.

R E F U S E C O L L E C T I O N - D I S P O S A L

As reported last year, the Council pursued the placing of a contract with Messrs. Tollemache for the installation of a refuse pulverisation plant, and this came into operation in May, 1970. The plant is operated by two men only and the results have been satisfactory. There appears to be a reduction in volume of at least 50% in the first instance but it is at the moment much too early to comment on the further reduction in volume which will take place over a period of time when the pulverised material consolidates in the cutting. One must note with concern, the effect of the increasing use of plastic material.

A refuse tip which is well maintained and producing no nuisance either from flies, rats or fire can be visually disturbing because of the untidiness caused on the surface by plastic items. There is little doubt that the packaging industry is the greatest cause of the problems arising from the disposal of domestic refuse. The excessive use of paper and plastics which cost considerable amounts of money to produce and further amounts of money for disposal seems to be an unnecessary waste of public wealth.

